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25 March 1965

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# CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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Approved For Release 2002/08/13 : CIA-RDP79T00975A008200220001-6

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1. Vietnam: Peiping gives propaganda support to Viet Cong call for foreign assistance in prosecuting the war. (Page 1)



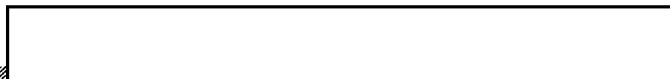
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\*Vietnam: Peiping has given prompt propaganda support to the open call by the Viet Cong on 22 March for foreign assistance in prosecuting the war.

A 25 March party daily editorial in Peiping declared that the "Chinese people" will join in sending "all necessary material aid, including arms and all other war materiel, to the Viet Cong." The editorial was somewhat more cautious on the use of Chinese personnel in Vietnam, however, stating that Peiping was ready to send its "own men, whenever the South Vietnamese people want them."

Peiping's contingent pledge of manpower appears to be an effort to pressure Washington into halting the further introduction of US combat forces into Vietnam. According to the 22 March Viet Cong statement, the insurgents will call for foreign "troops" if the US continues to send its own forces to Vietnam and further "expands" the war.

The Chinese, on 24 March, also reiterated their position that negotiations for a peaceful settlement in Vietnam were impossible as long as US air attacks against the DRV continued, and US troops remained in South Vietnam.

Peiping's remarks on negotiations echoed a 23 March statement by the President of the Viet Cong's Liberation Front. He declared flatly that "all negotiations are useless as long as the US imperialists do not withdraw all the troops, weapons, and means of war" from South Vietnam.

He then added a new note to the Communist demands by insisting that the Liberation Front would

have to "have the decisive voice" in South Vietnamese affairs before a settlement could be achieved. Previously, the Communists had only insisted that the Front should take part in any settlement.

The Chinese Communists are continuing to belittle Soviet aid to the DRV. During an interview with Japanese correspondents on 24 March in Peiping, a senior official declared that Moscow had not given "serious" assistance to Hanoi thus far and called recent remarks by Soviet leaders about the possibility of sending "volunteers" to Vietnam "sensational statements" issued only after it was clear that the US could not win the war.

There is still no evidence to confirm Brezhnev's assertion on 23 March that the USSR "is already" assisting the DRV. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the Chinese were interfering with Soviet aid shipments. This may represent Soviet efforts to embarrass the Chinese. If true, however, these actions would reflect the intensity of the Chinese desire to prevent Moscow from regaining any influence with Hanoi. Such actions would risk an open Soviet denunciation of Chinese obstruction of aid to another socialist state and thus adversely affect Chinese-Vietnamese relations.

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The Bloc states are acting in unison on the issue of the use of non-lethal gas against the Viet Cong. They apparently hope to make this a major propaganda issue. Editorials and commentaries from Hanoi, Peiping, and Moscow during the past two days have

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depicted the gas as "poisonous," and have assailed its use as "inhuman" and a "monstrous crime" against all the Vietnamese people. The bloc apparently hopes the issue can be blown up to the dimensions of the anti-US sentiment sparked by Communist "germ-warfare" charges during the Korean War.

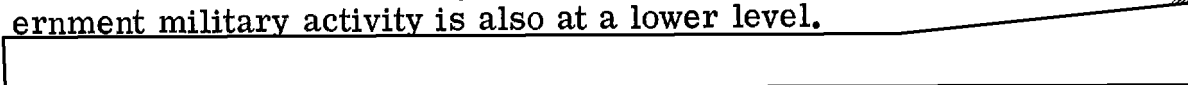


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Catholic leaders also continue to be basically unenthusiastic or even hostile to the Quat regime. A leader of northern Catholic refugees has claimed that the Quat government is a tool of the Buddhist Institute, which he suspects of maneuvering to eliminate Catholic influence from the government in alliance with certain generals. The possibility of another Catholic-led coup attempt cannot be excluded.

Viet Cong military activity continued yesterday at the low level noted throughout the past week. Government military activity is also at a lower level.

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NOTES

\*Bolivia: The commander of the armed forces, General Ovando, appears to be backing away from a confrontation with junta President Barrientos. Ovando is now under attack by the influential Nationalist Revolutionary Movement, which is urging Barrientos to send Ovando out of the country. It is possible, however, that Ovando's supporters may attempt to back him by force of arms.

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